


HYMEN  
OR  
THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

*NORMAN HAIRE*



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# HYMEN

## TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*For the Contents of this Series see the end of  
the Book*

# HYMEN

OR

THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

BY

NORMAN HAIRE

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# HYMEN

OR

## THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

### I

This little book is an extension of a paper on *Happiness and Marriage* which I read before a Scientific Society. In preparing that paper I found that to deal at all adequately with my subject it was necessary to devote some consideration to the whole sexual ethic now current, as well as to the question of sex-education. The scope of this book is, therefore, perhaps rather wider than the title indicates, but I have endeavoured to keep Marriage in view as the central problem, and to consider the other problems of sex-life only in so far as they are of importance in relation to marriage.

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Some of my opinions and prophecies will no doubt appear startling and revolutionary to the reader unacquainted with sexology. Startling I am afraid they must remain—it is inevitable that one should be startled when one sets oneself for the first time to examine, with complete scientific objectivity, problems which one has hitherto not examined at all, simply accepting the conventional judgments which have been inculcated, directly or indirectly, by one's early training.

But I must protest that I am not revolutionary. I have the greatest distrust of revolutionary changes. *While a law exists it should be obeyed. If the law is bad, one should not disobey it—one should attempt to get it changed.* And the best way to get a law changed is to educate public opinion to realize that the law needs changing. Hence the importance of free discussion of sex-problems.

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There is another point that I wish to make clear. When, in the course of this essay, I pass an adverse criticism on our present attitude towards any social evil—prostitution, say, or incest, or abortion—it must not be supposed that I am praising or advocating that evil. Very often I shall be pointing out that the evil is not *always* quite as bad as we are apt to consider it, and that we might make it much less bad if we were to adopt a different attitude towards it. Sometimes I shall suggest that what is now considered to be a grave social evil may at any rate be not so anti-social as some other activity which we do not condemn at all. Occasionally I shall suggest that what is now considered a grave evil may conceivably, in certain circumstances, be the means of avoiding a greater evil.

The reader may be struck by the fact that in certain directions I prophesy increased freedom for the individual,

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so long as his activity does not harm the community. I should like to point out that in many other directions I prophesy the more careful safeguarding of communal interests where unrestrained individual liberty may threaten them.

In a word, it is not the *abolition* of sexual morality that I am suggesting—it is rather the *improvement* of it. Just as a piano needs tuning so that it may give the sweetest music, so, I believe, our sexual morality needs readjustment—a little loosening here, and a little tightening there—if individual and communal life is to be as harmonious as possible.

Any moderately intelligent person who goes about the world with his eyes open—who is willing to face the truths of life even if they are disagreeable—must be struck by the appalling frequency of unhappiness in marriage. I can find no reason to believe that my

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circle of friends and acquaintances is an exceptional one, and if I am to judge by them I must conclude that a large majority of marriages are unsuccessful. At present it is impossible, and it must always be difficult, to offer any exact statistics on such a point ; but, speaking broadly, I should say that only one marriage in four may be judged as even tolerably successful, and a very much smaller proportion can fairly be considered as really happy.<sup>1</sup>

Now I believe that this frequency of unhappiness is only one manifestation of a very widespread sexual unhappiness ; and, if we are to seek out the causes of failure or success and to indicate the lines along which marriage is likely to develop, it is essential that we should begin by considering the

<sup>1</sup> On careful reflection I fear that I have given an unduly large proportion of successes, and an unduly small proportion of failures, but I prefer to err on the side of optimism.

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sex-problem in general. Our present-day attitude towards these problems is terribly muddle-headed and wrong,<sup>1</sup> and gives rise to an appalling amount of quite unnecessary suffering. Only those who, through their personality and calling, receive the intimate confidences of large numbers of men and women, have an opportunity of realizing how frequent and how devastating such suffering is. Confidences like these come usually only to one who is sympathetic, tolerant, and unprejudiced ; and it is, perhaps, not easy to appreciate the outlook of the sufferer unless one has, in one's own life, known some such unhappiness. The doctor, the priest, and the educationalist (using these words in their widest sense) are those whose callings afford most oppor-

<sup>1</sup> Here and there in this essay will be found, unaltered, a few sentences from my introduction and notes to the English edition of *Woman* (*Wie Bist Du Weib?*), by Bernhard Bauer. London 1927.

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tunity to receive confidences of this kind, but unfortunately the majority of persons in these professions have not escaped the general ignorance and prejudice in respect of matters relating to sex, and are therefore not in a position to sympathize with, and help, those who may wish to confide in them.

I have used the words 'general ignorance and prejudice in respect of matters relating to sex', and shall proceed to explain what I mean. The ignorance is due to lack of proper sex-education—a subject to which I shall refer later. The prejudice is due to our own faulty standards of sex-conduct. These standards are based largely on long-standing religious and social commands and prohibitions, many of which had a real value in some earlier condition of society, but are now obsolete or obsolescent. There seems to be a general belief that morality (especially sex-morality) is a fixed

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thing, immune to change, though the derivation of the word itself plainly shows that 'morality' is a matter of custom and varies from age to age and from place to place. As Kipling says :

' Still the world is wondrous large, seven seas  
from marge to marge,—

And it holds a vast of different kinds of man ;  
And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts  
of Khatmandhu,

And the *crimes* of Clapham *chaste* in Mar-  
taban.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus, to give only two illustrations, abortion, which under certain conditions is legal in Turkey and Soviet Russia, is illegal in this and most other European countries. In France it is criminal to advocate the limitation of the family, to teach contraceptive methods to others, or even to use them oneself (!). In the United States of America it is legal to advocate family limitation, but illegal to teach or use contraceptive methods. In England, Holland, and many other countries, the law permits one not only to advocate

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by kind permission of Mr Rudyard Kipling.



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family limitation, but to teach and use contraceptive methods. Innumerable instances of different legal standards of morality, in different countries at the same cultural level, could be brought forward were it desired.

Many sex-customs and many sex-tabooes arose in primitive communities in relation to magic or to primitive religion, and should logically have been relegated to the limbo of forgetfulness when belief in that magic or that religion ceased. With the progress of civilization and the increase of knowledge, communities have always tried to modify sex-customs in accordance with their own needs, but it seems that there has always been a tendency for many of the old sex-customs to persist, and religion of one sort or another has usually been the instrument of their preservation.

Religion has always asserted that there is an absolute *right* and an absolute

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*wrong*,<sup>1</sup> and that definite rules may be laid down that certain actions are *good* and certain actions *bad* without relation to the circumstances of any particular case. This view of human conduct is ridiculous and impracticable. To take only one example: Certain religions have commanded 'Thou shalt not murder,' and have condemned murder as an ungodly act. But even this injunction is obviously not capable of universal application, for the same religions have always permitted, or even prescribed, the murder of those who have committed certain other

<sup>1</sup> 'What was done in the name of righteousness in one era is condemned as infamous in another. Right and wrong are social formulations made in the name of a god or gods, and fallible because of the element of human interpretation (or misinterpretation) inherent in them. New views and new lines of conduct always tend to be "wrong" in that they conflict with established standards. It is difficult for any intelligent reader of to-day to accept seriously the many arguments that were put forward to prove that the abolition of slavery would be "wrong" in God's sight.' (H. Crichton Miller, M.A., M.D., *The Psychological Aspect of Contraception*. London 1926.

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‘ sins ’ ; and, so soon as a war begins, the priests of those religions hasten to exhort the soldiers of their flock to murder the soldiers of the enemy, and they even invoke on the murderers the blessing of the very god whom they have previously credited with the prohibition of murder. Thus in practice such absolute rules of conduct are found to be useless and inconvenient.

It is necessary to put aside the accumulated litter of customs and taboos which we have inherited from our ancestors, and to formulate standards of conduct in a reasonable way. We must remember that standards of conduct depend ultimately on social convenience : generally speaking an act which is beneficial to Society is *right*, and an act which is harmful to Society is *wrong*. A given action may be right under certain circumstances and wrong under others, but we must not forget that in communal life there

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should be a compromise between the interests of Society and the interests of the individual, so that, while the individual must consider the claims of the community, the community should likewise consider the claims of the individual. Certain actions affect only the particular individuals concerned, or at any rate affect them very intensely and the rest of Society very slightly or remotely, and in such cases the individuals concerned should be left free to decide their course of conduct for themselves.

It has been necessary to digress into the subject of general ethics, but we can now return to our theme.

I said above that, with the progress of civilization and the increase of knowledge, communities have always tried to modify sex-customs in accordance with their own needs. A brief examination of the sex-codes of two such different peoples as the ancient

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Jews and the ancient Greeks makes it clear that the great contrast between their sex-standards was, in the main, directly dependent on the contrast between their social needs.

The Jews were a small race with great ambitions. They depended on a large army to defend their very existence against the hostility of neighbouring peoples, and on an increasing population to achieve what they believed to be their divinely ordained mission. Their tribal god—Jehovah—had commanded them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. In order more effectively to do this they were polygynous—there seems to have been no limit to the number of wives a man might have. Anything which tended to prevent increase of population was considered immoral. For a man to remain unmarried was disgraceful; onanism, homosexuality, and bestiality were all offences meriting the severest

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penalties. Fornication and adultery were crimes against property as well, the unmarried woman being the property of her father, and the married of her husband. Persons committing either of these two crimes would be likely to endeavour to avoid pregnancy—for pregnancy would be an evidence of their guilt ; so these two acts would also tend to prevent increase of population. These two acts, therefore, were doubly anti-social, and were, like the other crimes above-mentioned, punishable with death. Infanticide was categorically forbidden by the tribal deity.

The Greek civilization was very different, and offers a correspondingly different sex-code. Here we see a number of small States of limited area, with a definitely restricted food-supply. If the population outgrew the supply of food, famine would ensue, and wars for the conquest of neighbouring territory would be inevitable. It became neces-

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sary to restrict the population in accordance with the small available food-supply. All sorts of expedients were adopted to attain this end, and the sex-code is in almost complete contrast with that of the Jews. Fornication and adultery<sup>1</sup> were not only tolerated, but regarded as a matter of course, and prostitutes enjoyed a comparatively high status. Homosexuality became so general in some communities that it was considered a disgrace if a young man did not have a male lover. Since the Greek myths contain many stories of gods who assumed the shape of animals in order to mate with mortals, we may judge that even bestiality was not regarded as revolting. Infanticide was an established custom.

I am not concerned here with making any attempt to estimate the comparative values of these two widely

<sup>1</sup> Adultery, being an offence against property, was, however, punishable in some Greek communities.

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different moral codes. What I wish to stress is that each system had a very practical foundation—in the one case a desire for increase of population, in the other a desire for its restriction.

Our sex-codes to-day have by no means such rational foundations. In Christian countries our code is based mainly on that of the ancient Jews, which has been handed down to us, slightly—but quite inadequately—modified by the Christian Churches. While the ancient Jews forbade fornication and adultery, they allowed polygamy, concubinage, and divorce by consent.<sup>1</sup> The religionists of to-day, however, prohibit all of these. And it is not only the religionists whose attitude is determined by this inherited sex-code. It has gradually coloured the whole of public opinion, so that even the most

<sup>1</sup> The wife's consent was of no importance. The husband could divorce his wife at will. Divorce at the will of either partner is obtainable in Soviet Russia to-day.



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enthusiastic Rationalists, Agnostics, and Atheists, however loudly they may proclaim their emancipation from the teachings of the various religions, frequently show strong evidence of the religious tradition in their moral judgments.

Our confused attitude towards sex-questions cannot, perhaps, be better illustrated than by a reference to our present views with regard to any breach of the law against marriage or intercourse within the prohibited degrees of kinship, including incest.

In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, I want to state explicitly that I condemn incest, and that I do not agree with those who recommend close in-breeding and incest as means of race-regeneration practicable in European civilizations to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from any religious or other

<sup>1</sup> See *Man : an Indictment*, A. M. Ludovici. London 1927.

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non-rational objections, there are two rational objections to incest which must be considered : (1) It may result in the production of defective offspring and so harm the race ; (2) It may, and often does, involve the seduction of young persons.

Let us examine the first objection. It *may* result in the production of defective offspring, but this is by no means constant. Geneticists have established the fact that, in in-breeding, heritable characters common to both parents tend to be intensified in the offspring. If the parents are bad stock the offspring is likely to be worse : if the parents are good stock the offspring is likely to be better. Horse- and cattle-breeders, in practice, improve their strains by taking animals of good stock and in-breeding them for several generations. Prolonged in-breeding, for generation after generation, without the introduction of a

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fresh strain, often leads to apparent deterioration.

But let us see what the geneticists themselves have to say about this apparent deterioration: 'The only injury proceeding from in-breeding comes from the inheritance received. The constitution of the individuals resulting from a process of in-breeding depends upon the chance allotment of characters pre-existing in the stock before in-breeding was commenced; If undesirable characters are shown after in-breeding, it is only because they already existed in the stock and were able to persist for generations under the protection of more favourable characters which dominated them and kept them from sight. The powerful hand of natural selection was thus stayed until in-breeding tore aside the mask and the unfavourable characters were shown up in all their weakness, to stand or fall on their own merits.

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‘ If evil is brought to light, in-breeding is no more to be blamed than the detective who unearths a crime. Instead of being condemned it should be commended. After continued in-breeding a cross-bred stock has been purified and rid of abnormalities, monstrosities, and serious weaknesses of all kinds. Only those characters can remain which either are favourable or at least are not definitely harmful to the organism. Those characters which have survived this ‘ day of judgment ’ can now be estimated according to their true worth. . . .

*‘ In-breeding is not in itself harmful ; whatever effect it may have is due wholly to the inheritance received. ’*<sup>1</sup>

‘ Continual cross-breeding only tends to hide internal defects, not to exterminate them. We may not, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> *In-breeding and Out-breeding*, by East and Jones (Monographs on Experimental Biology). Philadelphia and London 1919.

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lightly ascribe to in-breeding or inter-marriage the creation of bad racial traits, but only their manifestation.' <sup>1</sup>

'Whenever marked tendencies to sterility and barrenness appear and other serious defects keep reappearing the remedy is intensive close mating accompanied by rigid selection so as to eliminate the undesirable characters as quickly as possible. . . . *Nothing of value is necessarily lost by in-breeding*, and vigor can be restored in increased measure because of the hereditary weaknesses which have been weeded out. Selection in in-bred families carried out in this way has a wide applicability, and while it is a drastic procedure it is far better than continued outcrossing which merely masks the weaknesses, increases them in numbers, and hands them on as a problem for the future to solve.' <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Genetics and Eugenics*, by Prof. W. E. Castle.

<sup>2</sup> *Genetics*, by D. F. Jones. London 1925.

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‘ In-breeding is not necessarily harmful therefore, in fact it can be definitely advantageous. . . . *The effects depend on the genetic constitution of the individuals concerned and not upon any pernicious attribute of in-breeding itself.*<sup>1</sup>

Now in my opinion this system of regenerating the race by intensive in-breeding is not applicable to societies such as that in which we live at the present day, because public opinion would not countenance the ‘ rigid selection ’ which must accompany continued in-breeding if it is to have good results. Whether public opinion will alter so as to permit, or even enforce, the elimination of the unfit by sterilization or infanticide is a matter of opinion. We shall be returning to this point later. For the present we can limit our attention to the fact that the geneticists have proved that the harm

<sup>1</sup> *Animal Genetics*, by F. A. E. Crew. Edinburgh and London 1925.

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to the race from any single case of in-breeding is at least problematical even if the union results in offspring. Where the incestuous couple take care that no child results from the union, this objection obviously does not come into consideration at all.

If then we attempt to form a rational judgment about incest we may say: Incest involving the seduction of young persons is gravely anti-social, and every care should be taken to prevent it. Incest not involving the seduction of young persons is also to be condemned because of the possibility of the two persons carrying bad recessive qualities which may fortify each other so that the offspring is defective. Here then is quite sufficient reason for social condemnation of incest.

The general condemnation of incest, however, is not based on the scientific reasons against it which actually exist, but on a religious taboo, and this is

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clearly manifested whenever a case of incest comes into question. The vindictiveness shown is quite obviously not based on reason. I remember being struck about a year ago by two contiguous columns in one of those sensational Sunday newspapers which offer such fascinating material to the psychologist—the psychology of the judge and jury, of the journalist, and of the reading public is often as interesting as that of the criminal.

One column was filled with a particularly lurid account of a case in which a widower of forty-eight had for some two or three years lived with his daughter of twenty-eight. She was a widow and childless, had entered into the arrangement of her own free will, and was very happy with the man. They had been successful in avoiding pregnancy. A neighbour or relation denounced them to the authorities, and both were sentenced to the maximum



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term of imprisonment. The judge delivered a long speech describing his own horror at the unspeakable crime, the jury expressed their equal horror, and the journalist, not to be outdone, headed the column with his most fervid epithets.

The neighbouring column contained a long and sympathetic report of a recent idyll—a romance of the deaf and dumb. It began with the description (and photographs) of a man and a maid. It described how they had been born deaf and dumb, and drew a moving picture of the greyness and sadness of their childhood and youth, cut off from hearing and speech. Now, however, in the early twenties—and here the journalist grew playful—Cupid had fired his arrow into their hearts ; and during the previous week—here entered the religious *motif*—they had been joined in the holy bonds of marriage. (Picture of bridal group inset.) There

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followed a glowing prophecy of their happy future, and the article ended with a touching forecast of the couple in their old age, seated at their fire-side, like Darby and Joan, and surrounded by a horde of their children and grandchildren—presumably deaf-mutes also.

If our judgments in such questions were governed by reason and considerations of social welfare, this particular case of incest would have been regarded as, at any rate, far less anti-social than the union of the two deaf-mutes who married without first being sterilized.

But no ! Provided that they do not offend against accepted taboos, the most loathsomely contaminated persons may pollute the health of the nation with impunity. Indeed, if an epileptic bridegroom falls in a fit as he goes up the aisle before the ceremony, he is rushed into the vestry for the application of restoratives so that the marriage

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need not be postponed. Public opinion is so misguided that such people are even considered to have a call on our sympathy and charity—our purses, forsooth, must be opened to assist them in their work of propagating the unfit.

In the year 1925 a London daily paper printed the following article :

### DOOMED TO BE BLIND.

#### *Sad case of Children of a Sussex Railwayman.*

Three children in one family having successively to lose their eyes, is the distressing situation described by Mr —, J.P. of — Street, —, in an appeal for funds to relieve the parents of any financial worry.

The parents are Mr and Mrs — of —. Mr. — is a goods-porter. Mr — (to whom any help should be sent) states that the eldest child,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years, has had both its eyes taken out ; the next,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years, has had one eye removed and is losing the other ;

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the third child is a baby a few months old, and it is expected that it will have the same trouble.<sup>1</sup>

The appeal, it should be noted, is for funds to relieve the parents of *financial* worry—so that they can go on producing children doomed to be blind, to live a life of suffering themselves, and to be a burden on the community. It is not suggested that the parents should be made to feel that they are sinning against the children and against Society, or that they should be instructed how to avoid bringing children predestined to blindness, into the world, either by contraception or by sterilization.

Such an appeal is possible only because Society has a false standard of values—a standard which is hurrying us to national and racial disaster.

<sup>1</sup> I have suppressed the names and addresses to avoid wounding the feelings of the persons concerned.

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To-day we inflict severe punishment on mutually consenting incestuous adults who have taken care that their union shall be sterile, while at the same time we illogically permit grossly unfit couples, who happen to be unrelated, to marry and produce as many unfit children as they desire.

There is scarcely a single subject relating to sex on which we seem capable of thinking and acting rationally, and our prejudices give rise to incalculable harm to Society. A flagrant example is the matter of prostitution.<sup>1</sup> Instead of realizing that in the *present* state of Society, prostitution is inevitable, and doing our best to improve its conditions, we pretend that it is unnecessary and we make the worst of it. *I regard prostitution as a social evil*, and have no desire to sing the praises of the women who earn

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, G. Bernard Shaw.

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their livelihood in this occupation ; but I cannot subscribe to the almost incredible nonsense which is so frequently talked about prostitution and prostitutes. We are commonly told that prostitutes all belong to one type, and long lists of ' typical characteristics ' are adduced in support of the statement. In truth, prostitutes are just as different from one another as any other body of women engaged in one occupation. They present no more adherence to a common type than, say, hospital nurses or charwomen. A highly-coloured picture is drawn of the ultimate fate of the prostitute. She is described as degenerating after a few years into a drunken, diseased old hag, ending her days in misery and squalor. This picture is really true only of the prostitute who has been a failure. Is she so very much worse off than a girl who has failed at domestic service or in any other occupation ? It is pointed

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out that the prostitute has to endure the embraces of drunken lovers. Is she so much worse off in this regard than the married woman who has to endure the embraces of a drunken husband?

Woman, as Mr C. E. M. Joad has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> has through the ages had two methods of livelihood open to her — ‘Throughout the recorded history of civilization, the only recognized way for a woman to make her own living has been through her body. Her body being her one saleable asset, she could employ it in either of two ways. She could sell the use of it to one man for an indefinite period, or she could lease it to a number of men for short and strictly regulated periods. The first method is known as marriage; the second as prostitution.’<sup>2</sup> Are we justified in laying down a hard-and-

<sup>1</sup> *Thrasymachus, or The Future of Morals*. (“To-day and To-morrow” Series.) London 1925.

<sup>2</sup> This view of marriage will, no doubt, be hotly criticized and disputed in certain quarters,

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fast rule that one method is, *in itself*, more 'moral' than the other? I grant that a wife who bears and rears a healthy family may be of more service to Society than any prostitute, but on the other hand one may well question whether the prostitute does Society

but there is no doubt that it is really the view which most people hold, though often without fully realizing it. Thus in an Editorial on Marriage in a London evening Paper of April 2nd, 1927, appear the following lines :

'A man who marries at the age of, say, 26 a woman of 21 (and these ages are generally approved) finds himself twenty years later barely, if at all, past maturity, and capable of finding himself, if he wishes to do so, a new mate no older than his wife was when he first married. His wife, generally speaking, is not in the same position. Her *attractions* are diminished, and with them the probability of finding herself a new partner. If her husband chooses to declare that, because the marriage is childless or because the children of the marriage are grown up, he is now free, then she can be deprived of that *assured position* and domestic life which ought to be the consolation of her declining years and the *reward* of what she has presumably been to her husband in youth.'

Either this means nothing at all, or else it means that the writer of the Editorial regards a married woman as rendering sexual service to her husband in return for lifelong support—and a sort of pension when her 'attractive' days are at an end.



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more harm than a wife who bears and rears—or leaves Society with the burden of rearing—a family of physically or mentally defective children.

So long as we regard any activity as utterly degraded and contemptible, we tend to make it worse, by driving it into secrecy and by making the persons engaged in it feel that they are pariahs. If once we cease to regard the prostitute as a moral leper, she will, at any rate to some extent, regain her self-respect, and cease to regard Society as her enemy. And until we do this all our efforts to stop the spread of venereal disease will be futile.

Again, the general attitude towards Birth-Control to-day is a partial and inconsistent reflection of the ancient Jewish attitude. Church and State oppose Birth-Control, though social conditions obviously demand it, and individual practice of it is becoming almost universal. The official Church

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opposition still quotes the saying of the tribal god of the Hebrews : ' Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth ', though this exhortation is admitted to have been addressed to Adam and Eve when they were the only two human beings on the whole earth, and repeated to Noah when he and his three sons and their wives were the only men and women left alive !

Social conditions to-day are different from those of the ancient Jews or the ancient Greeks, and *neither of their sex-codes is adapted to our needs*. Nay more, conditions to-day are very different from those in our own community one hundred, fifty, or even twenty years ago. As social conditions change, the sex-code must undergo corresponding alterations. We may have the very strongest approbation or condemnation for any course of sex-conduct, but we should base it, not on outworn customs and taboos, but

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on some reason that is applicable to our life to-day. We must cease to swallow whole all the conventional sex-judgments which are presented to us : if not, we shall continue to suffer from indigestion—in the form of widespread sexual unhappiness. We must re-examine these conventional standards in the cold light of reason. They must be considered objectively, dispassionately, unemotionally, and it will be found that hard-and-fast rules are seldom satisfactory, and that many time-honoured customs and judgments must be modified, or relegated to the dust-heap, and replaced by others more suitable to our own social conditions.

One of the main difficulties in the way of a more rational attitude towards sex is the apparently very low view the religionists take of human nature. They seem to imagine that, if legal and religious prohibitions were at all modified, almost all men and women

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would at once fly to the furthest limits of excess in all varieties of normal and abnormal sexual activity! But the experience of ordinary married couples does not bear this out. As a reaction from the enforced sex-repression lasting from puberty till the time of marriage, newly married people are often immoderate for a little while after the bar to satisfaction is removed, but it is very rare for this to continue long. If one investigates the marital life of a large number of couples who have been married for more than two or three years, one is surprised by their sexual moderation. Indeed, among all persons, whether married or unmarried, sexual excess is far less commonly met with than sexual starvation, and in the great majority of cases excess seems to be the direct reaction to, and result of, an antecedent deprivation.

The conventional moralist appears to fear especially that the removal of

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the present deterrents would lead to excessive sexual demands of the male on the female. This view of the male as generally over-sexed and the female as generally under-sexed has little foundation in fact. Every sexologist is aware that the normal woman has as vigorous a sex-appetite as the normal man, and it is just as frequent for married women to complain of their husband's inadequacy as of his sexual excess. Since women have to bear the burden of unwanted pregnancy, they frequently object to the danger (from this point of view) of even *moderate* demands from their husband, but it is quite clear to the unprejudiced observer that it is generally the possibility of impregnation, and not the marital relation itself, that is repugnant to them. In some cases, of course, the repugnance arises primarily from the fear of pregnancy, and later becomes transferred to the whole relationship.

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## II

The primary object underlying marriage has always been, and still is, sexual union. Marriage to-day, among civilized peoples, has of course many other purposes—individual, familial, and social. I have no desire to underestimate the importance of these secondary objects, but we must not lose sight of the fact that they *are* secondary and that the primary object of marriage is sexual union. How many men would knowingly marry a woman who, from some organic malformation, was incapable of participating in the sexual act? How many women would knowingly marry a man suffering from incurable impotence? There are a few people shortsighted and inexperienced enough to enter into such a union, but how many parents of intelligence and experience would

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approve of their children doing so?

The satisfaction of appetite being the primary object of marriage, it is necessary for us to undertake at this point a brief consideration of the sex-impulse. The impulse to satisfy this appetite is as universal and instinctive as the impulse to satisfy the hunger for food. But while the appetite for food manifests itself in a well-developed form immediately after birth, the sex-appetite does not manifest itself in its fully-developed form until the age of puberty. This appetite has been shown to be directly dependent on the physiological activity of the gonads—a pair of ductless glands which take the form of the testicles in the male and the ovaries in the female. These are present at birth, but remain comparatively inactive during infancy and childhood, and do not function fully till the approach of puberty, which is, indeed, the outward sign of their activity.

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Puberty occurs at different ages in different races and in different latitudes, but in temperate climates the average age may be put at about sixteen.

Though the gonads do not function fully until puberty, they are not *altogether* quiescent in most children, and their activity is accompanied by manifestations of sex-appetite and activity—though not in their adult form. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that the sex-impulse is physiologically dependent on the activity of the gonads, so that it may be clearly understood that it is a natural impulse, common to all healthy adults, and that its absence in an adult is an evidence of physiological defect or disorder.

If we were living under more primitive conditions we should mate immediately we arrive at sexual maturity. Unfortunately, many economic, social, and religious factors combine to postpone the age of marriage, with the



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result that the natural appetite cannot receive its normal satisfaction as soon as maturity has been attained. Society demands that the young adult man and woman (especially woman) shall repress the sex-impulse for a number of years—often for the whole of their life. The thwarting of such an instinctive urge cannot be achieved in the normal person without interference with health—all sorts of mental and physical disorders may result ; and often the impulse, too strong to be thwarted, finds an outlet in some infantile or abnormal channel.

I have said that children frequently manifest sex-appetite and activity. It is by no means unusual to see infants-in-arms indulging in auto-erotic manipulations, and most of us remember some sort of sex-activity in our own childhood. Such conduct is to be regarded as quite normal—it is a form of sex-play which is to be expected in healthy children, and should excite

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neither surprise nor apprehension on the part of the parent or guardian. No harm results from such habits, *unless they are carried to excess*. I am convinced that moderate auto-erotic activity in the child is harmless in itself. But if the child is led to believe that such habits are both wicked and injurious, then *worrying about* the habit (and not the habit itself) may lead to considerable mental anguish and even physical disorder. Most of the signs and symptoms which are usually attributed to onanism are really due to apprehension, to a guilt-feeling, which are themselves engendered by faulty teaching on the subject. Of all the people who have discussed their sex-lives freely with me, I have met very few whose childhood was free from some sexual activity of this kind, and I incline to the view that such exceptions are abnormal.

I know that this view is directly

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opposed to the older, ' orthodox ', doctrine regarding auto-erotic practices—a doctrine which has caused untold suffering to innumerable adolescents, and has driven many to madness or suicide. My view is supported by the majority of the experts in sexology to-day.

I do not mean that the child should be encouraged to auto-erotic activities, and indeed if it shows any undue pre-occupation of this kind it should be gently and discreetly discouraged—firstly by diverting its interest and energy into other channels and secondly by a proper sex-education. There are two ways of inducing people to behave in a desirable way—the one, which must always be the worse, is by punishment and terrorization ; the other, always preferable, is by proper education.

How then are we to educate the child in respect of matters relating to sex ? This should be no more difficult than educating it about its other bodily

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functions—digestion, respiration, micturition, defœcation, or any other. The difficulty is that parents and teachers themselves so often feel embarrassed when talking about sex—embarrassed because they themselves have had a wrong sex-education.

But to-day there are, fortunately, an ever-increasing number of parents and teachers who are more enlightened, and quite able without any false shame or embarrassment to enlighten the child.

A great many people think that puberty is quite early enough to teach the child about the sex-functions ; but puberty is far too late. The child should be told the truth, or as much of the truth as it can understand, from the time it is old enough to ask the first question. It is perfectly easy to introduce a female cat or dog into the house, and to draw the child's attention, as early as the second or third year, to the fact that the animal is

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going to have kittens or puppies. This will sooner or later lead the child to ask if babies are born in the same way, and the parent can then explain that they are. There are few children who do not at some time or other see animals coupling. One would have already explained that flowers are the sex-organs of plants, that there are male and female flowers, and that the pollen or seed of the male is carried to the female by a bee or some other agency. Now the child is told that the seed of the male animal has to be carried to the female in order to produce young. Sooner or later, again, this will lead the child to ask questions about the human generative organs, and their purpose should be simply and truthfully explained. Many children will now say that they themselves want to make a baby ; but it is easy to reply that all a child's energy is needed for building up its own body, and that

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only when it is adult will it be fit to enter upon parenthood. If the child has already been accustomed to seeing its brothers and sisters naked in the bathroom or the bedroom, it will accept sex naturally and simply. Embarrassment troubles the child only if those who train it are embarrassed. If the child is noticed to be directing too much attention to its own organs, its natural curiosity should, as I have already said, be satisfied and its interest engaged in other pursuits. Immoderate activity of this sort should be discouraged, much as one discourages the child from picking its nose or eating too many sweets. It should not be made to feel that this activity in itself is 'wicked'. Self-gratification is so inferior to normal sexual activity in its capacity for giving pleasure, that no properly educated, healthy adult would practise it except *faute-de-mieux*.

One of the most urgent reasons for

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giving a child a proper sex-education from its earliest years is that such an education is the surest safeguard against seduction. The child who is accustomed to discussing sex-matters, freely and without embarrassment, with its parents and teachers will not hesitate to inform them of any experience which befalls it. If the experience is undesirable the parent or teacher will often be in a position to warn the child against it before any irreparable damage has been done.

This brief outline of a rational sex-education leads us to the age of sexual maturity, which in temperate climates is complete, physically, at about sixteen years of age.

At this age normal youths and maidens are ripe for mating. Puberty has ensued as a direct result of the increased activity of the gonads—the boy or girl is now an adult. Mating *should* occur without further delay.

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Long postponement of normal sexual activity may lead to physical and mental ill-health, to a continuance of auto-erotic activity (which in the adult is an unsatisfactory substitute for normal sexual intercourse, and which, if persisted in too long, may even lessen the person's fitness for normal mating), or to various forms of sexual aberration.

### III

It is desirable, then, that mating should be rendered possible soon after sexual maturity. This is possible of attainment in two ways—firstly by early marriage, and secondly by pre-marital experiences. Early marriage is at present considered more desirable, is becoming very frequent in America, and is likely to grow increasingly popular; but with it must come facilities for easy divorce. The younger the



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partners to a marriage are, the less are they likely to be competent to make a wise choice of a mate ; and the more likely is it that they will develop along diverging lines so that at the end of five or ten years they may find each other quite uncongenial.

Wider dissemination of information on contraception will facilitate early marriage, because it enables young people to marry, secure in the knowledge that they need not fear the advent of children before they can afford to keep them. But this economic hindrance to early marriage would disappear anyway if the State were to take over the responsibility of supporting its young citizens.

Unless we can render possible earlier marriage with increased facility for divorce, it seems inevitable that a time will come when it will be considered that some pre-marital union may be useful, especially if persons entering on

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marriage are to avoid the mistakes due to inexperience.

At present pre-marital intercourse is fraught with the danger of unwanted pregnancy, venereal disease, and discovery with consequent scandal ; but the unwanted pregnancy will in time disappear, consequent on the increased knowledge of contraception. It is likely that some unmarried mothers may deliberately allow a child to result from their pre-marital unions, and that if the child is healthy the State will welcome it and consider that the mother has done Society a service by producing a potentially useful citizen. There will probably no longer be any sort of prejudice against the unmarried mother or her baby.

The incidence of venereal diseases is certain to diminish. This diminution will be due partly to the increased efficiency of methods of prevention and cure of these diseases. Another impor-

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tant factor will be the gradual replacement of the professional prostitute by the voluntary mistress. As the social stigma on pre-marital intercourse becomes less and less until it finally disappears, young men will be able to enter into a love-relationship based on mutual attraction, instead of being compelled to have recourse to the venal relief of a professional harlot.

It is, however, unlikely that the harlot will ever disappear entirely. She will always find a certain demand, say, from men who are travelling and have not the time or the opportunity to form a more permanent union, as well as from men who find themselves temporarily separated from their wives or mistresses. She will appeal, too, to those men whose temperament is such that they feel the need of frequent change of partner.

The harlot of to-day is often repulsive and degraded, but it is largely Society's

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attitude towards her that has made her so. In other civilizations the courtesan has often been a comparatively high type of woman. The harlot of the future will probably be much rarer, and much better, than her predecessor of to-day. As Society comes to recognize that she is inevitable, and determines to make the best of her, she will develop an increasing self-respect, and will pay more and more attention to personal hygiene and attractiveness. It is even possible that the day will come when harlotry will be considered no more degrading than acting on the stage, which itself was considered highly immoral not so many centuries ago.

With the increasing equality of the sexes it is probable that male (heterosexual) prostitution may increase. It exists to-day, but so far it is considered to be far more evil than its female counterpart. This is a relic of the days

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of male privilege and female subjection. But if women are free to enter into all the vocations which were formerly reserved for men, it is not improbable that men may no longer abstain from entering those which were formerly reserved for women.

In the future some attempt will probably be made to prepare young men and women for marriage by giving them all the necessary information. In every other department of life we devote much pains to education, but in this sphere we endeavour to preserve complete ignorance. The whole of infancy and childhood is spent in learning what to eat, how to eat, how much to eat, and so on ; and we do not allow the child to choose its own diet until we are sure that it has been properly trained.

How different it is with sex ! We enjoin complete (technical) chastity and ignorance of sex-matters, and there can be no doubt that this is a very

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insecure foundation on which to build a happy marriage. Of the marriages which go to pieces because of lack of sexual compatibility, one learns far more often that the husband was hopelessly ignorant and inefficient before marriage than that he was a rake. And where it is the wife who is at fault, it is very often because she was brought up to attach such an exaggerated value to physical chastity that she cannot take a healthy view of sex even in marriage.

Both the man and the woman should learn something of the science and art of love, and if this involves the necessity for some pre-marital experience posterity may learn to accept it.

In spite of its theoretical condemnation, male chastity has never been considered really important, and the emancipation of woman is naturally leading to the extension of her freedom in this regard.

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Our present marriage-system is far from satisfactory, and if people are to enter into such an important contract at an early age, when they are still inexperienced and far from full intellectual development, it will need considerable modification.

*Lifelong monogamous marriage is, I believe, the ideal to aim at ;* but it is an ideal that is at present suitable to, and attainable by, only a very small minority of people. Most men are polygamous, in their desires at least : a large number are polygamous in practice ; and, of those who remain physically faithful to one woman, the majority do so only because of the fear of consequences in this life, or punishment in that after-life which has been invented and exploited by theologians.

Women are not usually so polygamous, though whether this is biological or due only to long ages of repression

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and convention, is not at present clear.<sup>1</sup> With the emancipation of woman, however, she too shows an increasing tendency towards polygamy, and it is likely that this tendency will increase rather than decrease in the future. Polygamy will not replace monogamy : it may grow up side by side with it. And, of course, polygamy will not be compulsory.

Marriage is so firmly established and religious dogmas still have so much power among the unthinking majority of the population, that it is unlikely that it will suddenly disappear or even undergo any startling and revolutionary change. In any case, sudden changes are undesirable, for, too often, they only lead to one extreme being replaced by its opposite. But gradual modifications are inevitable. The most probable is an extension of the facilities

<sup>1</sup> See my article "Marriage" in *The Practitioner*, London, April, 1927.



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for divorce. With growing emancipation from the thralldom of the dogmatic religions, divorce will, I feel sure, be made easier and easier, until at last it will be obtainable if either party wishes it, for otherwise the intelligent person will refuse to enter into what may prove to be a life-long indissoluble contract.

Marriage as we know it is really a product of the ages when knowledge of Birth-Control was non-existent or very imperfect, and woman was only a toy for man. If a man wanted sexual enjoyment he had to be prepared to support the woman who afforded it, and the children who were the unavoidable result of it.

With the emancipation of woman and her entry into the arena of life in competition with man, it is inevitable that before long he will cease to regard it as his duty to support her. Indeed, it is not improbable that she will fore-

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stall him, by claiming it as her right to support him. Most people still regard it as quite understandable that a mistress should be 'kept' by her lover, but are utterly shocked at the idea of the lover being kept by his mistress. But there are unmistakable signs in the novel and in the drama of the present day<sup>1</sup> that rational men and women are beginning to revolt against this manifest injustice to the male. In the future it is likely that the man and the woman will each be self-supporting, or that they will pool their resources, or that the more capable will assume the responsibility of supporting both. As for the children, they will probably be supported by the State from funds provided by the taxation of all citizens, male and female, whether married or unmarried, and whether they themselves have children or not. This

<sup>1</sup> e.g. *The Way you Look at it*, by Edward Wilbraham; *Kept*, by Alec Waugh.

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would be only a logical extension of our present system by which free education, and, if necessary, free food, is provided for all children.

It would also facilitate the adoption of polygamy, a phenomenon which has been, and still is, common among many peoples, but which, as a legally recognized form of marriage, has disappeared from many communities at the present day. If a man and a woman are so fortunate as to be really happily married, monogamy seems to me to be the ideal state, but the majority of people are unable to attain such an ideal, and for these legalized polygamy would offer many advantages.

There are many men, and some women, who apparently need more than one person of the opposite sex to make life reasonably happy for them. Such persons would be able to enter into polygamous unions. If the children are supported by the State there need

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be no limit, except personal inclination, to the number of legal mates a man or woman might have. If the State supported the children, it would be of no economic consequence which of her husbands were the father of any particular child. As we become more socialized, our sense of property, outside mere personal belongings such as clothes, furniture, books, a house to live in, etc., will gradually diminish, and increasing death-duties will eventually lead to the disappearance of the present system of inheritance of money, land, and so on.

*In the age to which I look forward, the parent will be ambitious to leave his child, not a large store of worldly wealth, but a good heredity, physical and mental.*

Before marriage the man and woman would state whether they desired the union to be monogamous or polygamous. If one wanted monogamy and the other were unwilling to agree to this, the marriage would not take

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place. If, however, either party, having agreed to monogamy, later on changed his or her mind and decided to take a second mate, a dissolution of the first marriage would be arranged without difficulty.

Polygamy, too, would offer a solution to the problem of those women, often among the finest of their sex, who want children, but have no desire for a permanent husband. Such a woman would be able to enter into a marriage with a man so that he could be the father of her children, and, having attained motherhood, she would let him go out of her life, whether she legally divorced him or not.

It must not be supposed that all or even a majority of persons would avail themselves of the opportunity for a plurality of mates. Those fortunate enough to find a really satisfactory partner would choose monogamy, and, even among those whose

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partner was only fairly satisfactory, many would tend to avoid the trouble of making a change. It is curious how, even with servants or with houses, a sort of inherent inertia leads us to put up with an old and familiar one rather than go to the trouble of looking for a new one. 'The devil I know is better than the devil I don't', says the average human being. And as a result of many centuries of repression, so many people to-day are sexually deficient that one may expect a very large proportion of adults to prefer monogamy, or at least to prefer one marriage-partner at a time.

These changes from the present marriage-arrangements will at first be violently opposed, particularly on the ground that they tend to break up the family. But it will be recognized that they tend to break up the family only when the family *ought* to be broken up. If father and mother and children are

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happy together, there is no reason why the greater freedom foreshadowed above should disturb these relations at all. Where they are not happy, they will be able to separate, instead of being forced to drag out a miserable existence together as they are to-day.

There can be no doubt that it is better for a child to be brought up with only one parent than with two parents who are always quarrelling with each other. It is better for children to be brought up by strangers or by the State than by irresponsible or incompetent parents. Indeed, one sometimes wonders whether the average parents are not the least fit persons in the world to bring up their own child. Their attitude towards it is so largely emotional, and so little rational, that they often find it very difficult to treat it with justice—they tend to err in the direction of either undue harshness or undue indulgence, or, worse

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still, they err in the two directions alternately.

Parents tend, too, to believe and to try to make their children believe, that they have done the latter a great favour in bringing them into the world at all. This is nonsense. In the vast majority of cases the parents do not deliberately intend to procreate the child—most children are procreated quite accidentally, as a by-product of a sexual congress, the real aim of which is the sexual gratification of the parents. Indeed, a great many are born *against* the wishes of their parents, through the failure of contraceptives or abortifacients. Even where the parents deliberately procreate a child, it is more often with a view to their own comfort than that of the child. Parents sometimes have children because they want their line to be carried on ; sometimes because they think it will be pleasant to be surrounded by a



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family in their old age ; sometimes because they want to have a source of support when their own earning days are over. Comparatively rarely do parents procreate children out of a sense of social duty. And, indeed, life holds so much unhappiness even for the most fortunate of us, that it is difficult to accept the traditional supposition that one's parents did one a good turn by bringing one into the world. For many of us it is truer to say that, whatever sacrifices our parents make, they can never compensate for the injury they did in bringing us into the world at all.

In the future, the relation of parents to children will be very carefully watched and controlled. This will at first be regarded as an unwarranted interference, much as the activities of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children are still regarded in some quarters. But undue harshness

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and undue indulgence will both be considered as reasonable causes for interference ; and special measures will be taken against those parents who try to live their children's lives for them. Thwarted persons, who have failed to achieve adequate self-expression and seek to find it by forcing their children into uncongenial occupations, will be judged quite unfit to bring up their children at all. When such cases come up for adjudication, the jury will not consist entirely of old people. Indeed, in all the councils of the future there will be a noticeably larger proportion of young people—between the ages of sixteen and forty—than one sees on such councils to-day. It will be realized that it is a mistake to believe that only the old can be wise. The old may have the benefit of experience, but too often they have forgotten the emotions and the needs of youth ; too often their view-point is distorted by

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physical, and especially by sexual, decline ; too often their conclusions are dictated by a real, though perhaps unconscious, jealousy of youth.

It must not be supposed that increased sex-freedom, even though it were for both sexes, and even though it were to embrace pre-marital unions and polygamy, would entirely do away with sexual unhappiness. There would still be many cases in which jealousy caused great distress, though, as people become accustomed to greater freedom, jealousy is likely to be less frequent and less acute than it is to-day. And there will always be marriages in which love cools only on one side and not on the other. But we must be content to look forward to the diminution of unhappiness : we cannot envisage its total disappearance.

To return to the subject of State-support of children. It is obvious that

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if Society is to support the children of individual parents, Society must have some say as to what sort of children, and how many of them it wants. Whoever pays the piper has a right to call the tune, and Society will be very definite as to its musical requirements.

There will first of all be a strict law that men and women suffering from diseases, physical or mental, which are likely to be transmitted to, or to damage, their offspring, must have no children at all. If they persist in having children, they will be sterilized forthwith. Sterilization does not mean castration, contrary to general belief—it can be carried out in both man and woman without any interference with physical or mental health, and without any disturbance of sexual desire, potency, or pleasure. In the light of present-day knowledge it is easy, safe, and harmless. Sterilization will not

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always need to be compulsory, though it will be necessary to use compulsion in some cases. Already in the United States of America, eighteen States have passed laws prescribing compulsory sterilization in certain cases, and many thousands of men and women have been thus dealt with. Sterilization is enforced only after very complete examination and study by a board of experts, and is hedged round with every possible precaution. But a great many people will submit *voluntarily* to sterilization. Even now it is not uncommon for persons with a strong sense of their duty to Society, to be sterilized—epileptics, persons who have formerly been insane, or in whose own person or whose family there are heritable diseases. With an increasing sense of social responsibility, the number of people voluntarily submitting to sterilization will increase.

The standard of fitness for parent-

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hood will, of course, be modified from time to time, in accordance with increasing knowledge of the complex science of Genetics. But the standard will be the best available in the light of the knowledge at any given time.

Those who are found to be permanently unfit for parenthood will be permanently sterilized. Those who are temporarily unfit may be subjected to temporary sterilization, perhaps by X-rays or superheating treatment applied to the reproductive glands, or by a process of immunization comparable to that used for protection against bacterial infection, or else they will be ordered to use a reliable method of contraception. At the moment, temporary sterilization by X-rays seems to be undesirable. Rats which were sterilized for a time by this means recovered their fertility, and produced offspring which appeared to be normal, but in the next generation many grave

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abnormalities occurred. Apparently the X-rays had caused severe damage to the germinal cells.

Even to-day medical science knows of methods of preventing conception which approach perfection<sup>1</sup> ; and here and there, in most of the countries of the world, doctors, biologists, and chemists are engaged in research in the endeavour to find something even better. With scientific discoveries the demand goes far to create the supply, and it cannot be long now before the perfect contraceptive will be discovered.

The unhealthy individual will be ordered, as I said, to use a trustworthy contraceptive. If this order is not obeyed, the resulting offspring will perhaps be destroyed in the embryo-stage by a legalized abortion ; or it may be allowed to go on to birth, when it will be examined to decide if it

<sup>1</sup> See my article in *The Practitioner*, London, July, 1923.

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should be permitted to survive or not  
But to these questions I shall return  
later.

This compulsory sterilization or contraception may have a three-fold justification. In many cases of maternal ill-health the mother's illness is aggravated by maternity, and either permanent or temporary avoidance of parenthood may be called for in the mother's own interest. Secondly, if either of the parents is unhealthy, it may be necessary in the interest of the unborn child to prescribe avoidance of parenthood, either for a time or for ever. No crime is greater than that of bringing a child into the world handicapped from its birth by the inheritance of actual disease, deficient resistance to disease, or deficient life-energy.

Thirdly, prohibition of parenthood is often necessary in the interest of Society. Physically or mentally defective children are of no use to Society



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—they are indeed a burden upon it, both in times of peace and in times of war. They are often not only unproductive—they actually handicap the progress of useful citizens by competing with them in the struggle for existence ; and indeed, with our modern extreme humanitarianism, we often pamper the weed to the detriment of the useful plant. To give only one example, the average annual sum expended in this country on the education of the mentally defective child who can never become a useful citizen is many times that spent on the normal child.<sup>1</sup>

Even with healthy parents, the limitation of offspring will always be necessary, for many reasons :

I. To prevent debility in the mother due to too frequent child-bearing. The period of pregnancy and suckling should last eighteen months, and most mothers

<sup>1</sup> See *Lysistrata*, by A. M. Ludovici (" To-day and To-morrow " Series). London 1924.

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need nine months' rest before they begin again the strain of another reproductive cycle. The optimum interval between births is from two to three years.

2. If the mother is debilitated by too frequent pregnancies, the unborn child is enfeebled by its mother's debility—it is robbed of its birthright before it comes into the world.

3. The first two years of a child's life are critical years, and during this time it need its mother's undivided attention. If babies are born at too frequent intervals, the attention of the mother must be divided between her babies and both may suffer.

4. At present the number of children in a family should be limited in accordance with the economic resources of the family, but when Society assumes the support of mothers and children this reason for contraception will disappear.

Even the most cursory study of vital

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statistics demonstrates the wastefulness of excessively large families. As the size of the family increases from two upwards, the death-rate of the children increases at first slowly, and then very swiftly.<sup>1</sup> This is partly explained by the fact that in our present Society, increased size of a family often means shortage of food ; but, even when Society provides the material sustenance, it will be difficult to provide the necessary attention ; and, even if this is attained by enlisting the services of other women who are not engaged in attending to children of their own, it will be impossible to guard the mother and child against the debility produced by too frequent motherhood, unless indeed we pick some women out to be *breeders*, and relieve them of all other activities so as to reduce the strain on their energy

<sup>1</sup> See *Gewollte und ungewollte Schwankungen der weiblichen Fruchtbarkeit*. By Dr P. W. Siegel. Berlin 1917.

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as far as possible. The bees have done something of this sort---it is not impossible, though I think it is unlikely, that mankind may follow their example.

In the future as I see it, contraception will be universally practised by all normal people. The best advice on this subject will be obtainable by all from the doctors. The doctor of the future will have a greater knowledge of sex-matters than has the doctor of to-day. Every Medical School will have its chair of Sexual Science, such as exists to-day at the University of Königsberg ; every large city will have its Institute of Sexual Science, such as exists to-day in Berlin under the leadership of its founder, Dr Magnus Hirschfeld. The medical student will be trained in sexology, and part of his training will deal with contraception. He will be able to advise his patients which contraceptive methods are trust-

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worthy and which are untrustworthy, which are harmful and which are harmless, and in particular he will advise the method most suitable in any given case.

To-day the methods of contraception most commonly used are untrustworthy and even harmful. There *are* trustworthy and harmless methods, but the public finds it difficult to learn them. When married people ask their medical adviser for information, he may refuse owing to some religious or social prejudice ; often, with the best will in the world, he *cannot* help ; he himself does not know, for in his medical school he has been taught nothing about it. The patient, unable to get information from her doctor, goes to a nurse or to some other lay person for advice. Now, incompetent in this matter as the untrained doctor may be, the non-medical adviser must be even worse ; for no non-medical person, at the present day, receives a

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training which renders him or her competent to make the necessary psychological and physical examination, arrive at the correct interpretation of the findings, determine the contraceptive most suitable for a given patient, and give the necessary instruction as to its use. The student of sexology is surprised and alarmed at the extent of ill-health due to faulty methods of contraception. In the future, with the progress of preventive medicine, much of this will be avoided.

The best contraceptive advice will be available from almost all medical practitioners ; only those will refuse to give it who still retain some outworn prejudice, and they will probably find their practice confined to patients as illiberal as themselves.

The best contraceptive information will be available at all state health-centres, and at the hospitals and centres for treatment of disease, which will be

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far less numerous than than now. Mankind is gradually learning the practical truth of the adage *Prevention is better than cure*.

The doctor of the future will be more concerned with the prevention of disease than with its cure, and will probably get a retaining-fee for keeping each person or group of persons well, instead of being paid only when they are ill. At present<sup>1</sup> we make it the doctor's interest to keep his patient ill as long as possible, and it is a testimony to the high degree of development of man's social sense that the medical profession work, for the most part, against their own interests. In the future, however, the doctor will have an additional stimulus to keep people healthy—he will do it to save himself unnecessary work.

The rapid growth of health centres

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to *The Doctor's Dilemma*, by G. Bernard Shaw.

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for mothers and babies, and the formation of health leagues, are encouraging signs. Germany has led the way with the establishment of official Advisory Centres on questions relating to Marriage. We in this country will adopt these later on—*much* later on, possibly ; but they are bound to come. They may develop out of our present birth-control centres, institutions which are inevitable and very useful in the absence of other sources of information on the subject, but which in their present form will, I think, prove only a temporary expedient.

The birth-control centre as we know it to-day has one great disadvantage. It is difficult for it to reach the persons who are *least* fit for parenthood—many more of these would be reached if the information were obtainable at hospitals, infirmaries, asylums, and prisons.

Contraceptive knowledge may be, and undoubtedly often is, used for



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selfish ends. Many persons avoid parenthood simply because they want to have a 'good time'. The best way to overcome this tendency is to educate people better in their duty to Society and to establish a public opinion which will regard the production of *desirable* children as a social service of primary importance. But there is no hope of establishing such a public opinion unless or until it is made quite clear that the procreation of *defective* children is a grave offence against Society.

Many persons fear that the increasing practice of contraception is having, or may have, dysgenic effects, because it is at present used more widely by those who have a strong sense of social duty than by the irresponsible and reckless. It is impossible to withdraw the knowledge of contraception from those who have it, even if we wished to do so. But we can, and I think we should, correct this one-sided application of

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what is in itself useful knowledge, by making information available to those who need it and do not possess it.

In the future the information will be specially directed to those who need it most ; while persons who are fit for parenthood will be encouraged to have a moderate number of children—the optimum number varying from family to family, from community to community, and from time to time.

One frequently hears the opinion expressed that widespread dissemination of contraceptive knowledge is harmful, in that it facilitates pre-marital and extra-marital intercourse. It is true that the removal of the fear of pregnancy may lead some persons to a sexual freedom from which they would otherwise be deterred ; on the other hand, this knowledge, by facilitating early marriage, is likely to diminish irregular unions. And it will certainly prevent many men from being driven

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to extra-marital relations through fear of adding to their family. On the whole, I think dissemination of contraceptive knowledge will prevent at least as much irregularity as it will cause.

A certain amount of reproduction will probably be carried on artificially. Already artificial insemination is quite commonly performed by animal-breeders and is not infrequently carried out in human beings. This will probably be increasingly employed for impregnating women who do not desire to mate in the ordinary way, and for obtaining large numbers of children from specially desirable fathers.

It is probable that young embryos—of good heredity on both sides—will often be removed from the uterus of the original mother and grown in the uterus of other women who volunteer for the service, or perhaps even in the uterus of other animals.<sup>1</sup> Such trans-

<sup>1</sup> See *Daedalus*, by J. B. Haldane. ("To-day and To-morrow" Series) 1924.

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ferences have already been successfully carried out by the experimental biologist, and this method of *Ectogenesis* is likely to be applied sooner or later in the human being.

Ectogenesis may even go further. In the case of the accidental death of a woman particularly suitable for parenthood, her reproductive glands may be transplanted into a female animal which has already had its own reproductive glands removed. Artificial fertilization with human spermatozoa would then give rise to a human embryo which would be incubated and brought to birth by the animal host. Only a few months ago a French scientist<sup>1</sup> announced that he had succeeded in performing such a transplantation and fertilization, in a female monkey ; and, at the moment of writing, the birth of a human child from the simian mother is eagerly (if somewhat sceptically)

<sup>1</sup> Dr Serge Voronoff, of Paris.

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awaited. But whether this particular scientist has succeeded or not, there can be little doubt that the thing will be achieved sooner or later.

Sterilization and contraception will cause deliberate abortion to become much less frequent. *Abortion is to be condemned*—it is a very serious interruption of a physiological cycle, and must always be a considerable strain on a woman's health, even if it is carried out under the best conditions. Carried out, as it usually is to-day, clandestinely, *it is very dangerous and productive of a very great amount of ill-health*. In most civilized communities to-day, abortion (unless in the presence of very grave disease in the mother) is illegal, and so no doctor with any reputation to lose will undertake it. It is, therefore, usually carried out by incompetent persons, whether medical or non-medical, and generally under conditions which leave much to be

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desired. While it remains illegal this state of affairs is likely to continue. Soviet Russia has legalized abortion during the first three months of pregnancy ; and permits it to be carried out in public hospitals under the most perfect conditions ; and maternal mortality and ill-health there may be expected to decrease. This example will probably be followed by other countries ; but eventually abortion will, I think, be permitted only in the few cases in which it is the less of two evils—where contraception has failed, or has not been practised, and in which it is very undesirable that the child should be born.

Somewhat later than the legal recognition of abortion, will perhaps come the legal adoption of infanticide.

Citizens would be sterilized or encouraged to use contraceptives if it were undesirable that they should have children. If by accident conception

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occurred, recourse might be had to legalized abortion. But when any child were born deficient, it would be destroyed at birth—or as soon after birth as its deficiency became unmistakable. Infanticide would at first be opposed on the grounds that mistakes might be made, or that it might be used for putting out of the way children who were, for some unworthy reason, not wanted. The possibility of abuse or error is inseparable from the most useful of social institutions, but eventually effective safeguards would be arranged. It is probable that defective babies would be examined by a carefully chosen board of medical experts who would consider the case and then decide the verdict. They would be no more liable to error than, say, the judges of to-day who decide whether a man charged with murder is to be executed or not, or the doctors who decide for or against a serious operation.

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Later still, Society will probably exercise the right of painlessly destroying persons who are a menace to it, either physically or otherwise. Such executions, and indeed all deprivation of life or liberty, will be carried out in a spirit, not of punishment, but of prevention.

But long before the adoption of infanticide, Society will have recognized and legalized the citizen's right to suicide, or euthanasia, at his own request. With the gradual decline in the belief in the supernatural, and the gradual shifting of the centre of gravity from a future life to this one, it will be recognized that, if an individual no longer finds sufficient happiness in life, he or she has a perfect right to abandon it. Suicide will probably be much more frequent than at the present day, but it will occur more often on account of incurable illness, and not so often, as at the present day, because of sexual unhappiness. It will take the form,



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not of painful and difficult self-execution, but of an easy and agreeable induction of artificial sleep, from which the patient will not wake.

There will be an interesting and important change in the Society of the future—the average age will be greater than that to-day. There will be fewer babies and children in proportion to the active adult population, and a greater number of old people. Men and women will probably live to a greater age, partly because of decreased competition in the struggle for existence on the part of excessive numbers of babies, partly owing to advances in medical science, and partly to the fairly general practice of “Rejuvenation”—either by grafting or irradiation of organs or by injection of organic extracts. Whether or not the actual span of life is increased by this method, the period of efficiency certainly will be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See my book *Rejuvenation*. London 1924.

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## IV

With better sex-education and improved facilities for normal mating soon after maturity, we may expect that the vast majority of mankind will find happiness in a normal union.

But, owing to inborn glandular defect or to mistakes in education which lead to psychological disorders, there will probably remain an ever-diminishing number of sexually abnormal persons, for whom normal mating is impossible.

These abnormals will be regarded as the victims of an inborn or acquired defect, for which they will not be held responsible. The sexual rights of other citizens, and especially of children, must be protected ; and if such abnormals infringe these rights, they will be subjected to some sort of *preventive* treatment, whether by medical means, by segregation, or in the last resort by

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painless death. But there will be no attempt to *punish* them for conduct which, it will be recognized, is the result of physiological or psychological disorder, and for which, therefore, they cannot be held responsible.

*The young must be protected, far more carefully than they are to-day*, from seduction by persons of either sex, whether normal or abnormal, and whether the seducer is a relative or not.

But so long as the sexual rights of others are not interfered with, and no undesirable children result, the sexual relations of two mutually consenting adults will probably be considered the private concern of the two individuals involved. We shall cease to persecute the unfortunate abnormals; and instead, we shall endeavour to cure them. Where cure is impossible, we shall not interfere with their rights as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others.

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### V

My prophecy is at an end. I make no claim to omniscience or infallibility. I claim only a fair amount of intelligence, a certain capacity for objectivity which one does not meet in one's fellows as often as one could wish, a high ethical standard, a well-developed social sense, and a real desire for the increase of human happiness by the removal of unnecessary causes of suffering.

It may be that in many details the changes I look forward to would prove less useful than I suppose. It may be that new discoveries will lead to new conditions which will alter our social needs.

Whether I am right or wrong in detail is of no particular importance. I have no desire to persuade others to accept my standards: I aim only to stimulate them to think for themselves, and to endeavour to arrive at rational standards of their own, based, not on superstition, but on the fullest knowledge that they can obtain.

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